

REMARKS

Claims remaining in the present patent application are numbered 1, 2, 4, 5, 8-14, 17-22, 24-25, and 28-32. Claims 6, 7, 16, 26, and 27 have been canceled. The rejections and comments of the Examiner set forth in the Office Action dated November 5, 2004 have been carefully considered by the Applicants. Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to consider and allow the remaining claims.

Newly Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants wish to thank the Examiner for the indication that Claims 7-10, 16-18, and 27-30 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including the limitations of their base claim and any intervening claims.

INDEPENDENT CLAIM 1

Applicants have herein amended into Independent Claim 1 the subject matter of Claim 7, which was cited on page 7 of the present Office Action as being allowable if rewritten in independent form including the limitations of its base claim and any intervening claims. As a result, newly amended independent Claim 1 is now allowable over the prior art, and a discussion of the 35 U.S.C. §103(a) rejection of that Claim is moot at this time. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that independent Claim 1, as amended, overcomes the Examiner's basis for rejection, and as such Claims 2, 4, 5,

and 8-12 which depend on newly amended independent Claim 1 are also in a condition for allowance as being dependent on an allowable base claim.

INDEPENDENT CLAIM 13

Applicants have herein amended into Independent Claim 13 the subject matter of Claim 16, which was cited on page 7 of the present Office Action as being allowable if rewritten in independent form including the limitations of its base claim and any intervening claims. As a result, newly amended independent Claim 13 is now allowable over the prior art, and a discussion of the 35 U.S.C. §103(a) rejection of that Claim is moot at this time. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that independent Claim 13, as amended, overcomes the Examiner's basis for rejection, and as such Claims 14, and 17-20 which depend on newly amended independent Claim 13 are also in a condition for allowance as being dependent on an allowable base claim.

INDEPENDENT CLAIM 21

Applicants have herein amended into independent Claim 21 the subject matter of Claim 27, which was cited on page 7 of the present Office Action as being allowable if rewritten in independent form including the limitations of its base claim and any intervening claims. As a result, newly amended independent Claim 21 is now allowable over the prior art, and a discussion of the 35 U.S.C. §103(a) rejection of that Claim

is moot at this time. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that independent Claim 21, as amended, overcomes the Examiner's basis for rejection, and as such Claims 22, 24, 25, and 28-32 which depend on newly amended independent Claim 21 are also in a condition for allowance as being dependent on an allowable base claim.

CONCLUSION

In light of the above-listed remarks presented herein, Applicants respectfully request allowance of the present Application.

Applicants further respectfully point out that no contested claims remain in the present Application.

The Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' undersigned representative if the Examiner believes such action would expedite resolution of the present Application.

Respectfully submitted,

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